



# Sweet Betsy from Pike



circa 1847

Composer: Unknown

## Verse 1

Oh, do you remember Sweet Betsy from Pike,  
Who went 'cross the plains with her lover Ike,  
With one yoke of oxen, one spotted hog,  
A tall Shanghai rooster, and a big yellow dog?

## Verse 2

One evening quite early they camped on the Platte,  
Twas next to the road on a green shady flat,  
Sweet Betsy was tired, lay down to repose,  
While Isaac stood gazing at his Pike County rose.

## Verse 3

Out on the prairie one bright starry night  
They opened some barrels and Betsy got tight.  
She sang and she screamed and she danced o'er the plain,  
And showed her bare legs to the whole wagon train.

## Verse 4

The Indians came down in a thundering horde,  
And Betsy was scared they would scalp her adored.  
So behind the front wagon wheel Betsy did crawl,  
And there she fought Indians with musket and ball.

## Verse 5

They came to the desert, where Betsy gave out.  
And down in the sand she lay rolling about,  
While Ike in great wonder looked on in surprise,  
Saying, "Betsy, get up, you'll get sand in your eyes."

## Verse 6

Sweet Betsy got up in a good deal of pain,  
And said she'd go back to Pike County again,  
But Ike gave a sigh and they fondly embraced,  
And they traveled along with his arm round her waist.

## Verse 7

They stopped at Salt Lake to inquire the way,  
And Brigham he swore that Sweet Betsy should stay.  
But Betsy got scared and she ran like a deer,  
While Brigham stood pawing the ground like a steer.



### Verse 8

The alkali desert was burning and bare,  
And Ike's good heart shrank from the death that lurked there,  
"Dear Old Pike County, I'll go back to you."  
Said Betsy, "You'll be all alone if you do!"

### Verse 9

The wagon broke down with a terrible crash,  
And out on the desert rolled all sorts of trash.  
Poor Betsy cried out as she stared at the mess,  
Ike loaded it up and they kept headin' West.

### Verse 10

They swam the wild rivers and crossed the tall peaks,  
And camped on the trail for weeks upon weeks.  
Starvation and sickness, hard work and slaughter,  
They reached California, 'spite of h— and high water.

### Verse 11

The horses ran off, and the cattle all died,  
And the last piece of bacon that mornin' was fried.  
Poor Ike was discouraged and Betsy was mad.  
The dog drooped his tail and was terribly sad.

### Verse 12

At last they climbed up on a very high hill,  
And stood looking down at old Placerville,  
Ike sighed and he said as he cast his eyes down,  
"Sweet Betsy, my darling, we've got to Hangtown."

### Verse 13

Old Ike and Sweet Betsy attended a dance.  
Ike wore a pair of his Pike County pants;  
Sweet Betsy she dressed up in ribbons and rings,  
Said Ike, "You're an angel, but where are your wings?"

### Verse 14

A miner asked, "Betsy, will you dance with me?"  
"I will, you old hoss, if you don't get too free.  
Don't dance me too hard, do you want to know why?  
Doggone you, I'm chock-full of strong alkali."

### Verse 15

Long Ike and Sweet Betsy were married of course,  
But Ike soon got jealous and wanted divorce.  
And Betsy, well satisfied, said with a shout,  
"So long, you big lummoX, I'm glad you backed out!"

